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AN



# ANSWER

TO THE

# LETTER

To the A U T H O R of the Case of  
Toleration Recogniz'd.

S I R,

**T** Ho' I care not to enter into Controversy, because they who differ from one another in Opinion, seldom alter one anothers Sentiments, yet since in the beginning of your Letter, you offer your objections in the the case of Scruples, (which I was surpris'd to see swell'd up to Rocks in your imagination before you ended it) I shall consider them still, as they show'd themselves at first to you, and as indeed they are, Scruples and no more; and shall endeavour to ease you of 'em if I can. You think that after I have Establish'd Toleration upon a solid Basis, I ruine the bottom on which I build it. But here let me intreat you to reflect again, upon the Toleration

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leration I have pleaded for, which comes neither to more nor less, than this; That every single Person, or particular Societies of Men, shou'd be permitted to Worship God as they think fit, now the only Argument you bring to show that I undermine my own foundation, is, that afterward I Argue, for cutting off all such from a share of publick Government, as cut themselves off from the National Religion of the Land: And when you show me the remotest inconsistency, between the denying to Men Secular Authority (which is all I wou'd have Dissenters depriv'd of) and the allowing them a liberty to Worship God as their Consciences do's direct them, (which is all the Toleration I have pleaded for) when (I say) you shall once show me the least inconsistency, between the denying to Men publick Jurisdiction, and liberty to Worship God as they think fit without Punishment, I will then acknowledge my mistake in ruining my own foundation, which yet I look upon as unshaken by any thing I have said, and as so sacred in it self, that I assure you, that if it and Sacramental Tests cannot stand together, I wou'd rather wish to see the Church left in an absolute dependence upon Providence, without any *Adminicle* of humane Wisdom to support it, than seek the Anti-Christian securities of Penal Laws to oppress, if it were but one single tender Conscience among all Mankind. But, Sir, to prove the Lawfullness of Secluding some, upon the simple score of their Religion, from any share of Secular Authority; Let me but ask you one Question, and that is, Whether or no, you think, that no degree of difference in Religious matters is a just ground to go by, in denuding Men of that Authority. If you think it shou'd not, then Papists and Pagans, Jews and Turks, and who not? (if they be but Englishmen) shou'd be admitted (upon your Reasonings) to their share of this Authority. If still (notwithstanding you have declar'd the contrary, without considering the consequences of what you have affirm'd) if still (I say) you think (which I hope you do) that there are certain differences in Religion, which are a sufficient warrant to seclude some from Temporal Dominion, then I wou'd fain have you to reflect upon these two particulars. *First*, That this Seclusion shou'd be proportion'd to the differences of Religion, which considering the vast diversity of Opinions about Religious Matters, wou'd prove puzzling if not impossible to the Wisdom of any Nation; which will bring us back at last to Sacramental Tests. *Secondly*, If as you say p. 2. Col. 2. of yours to me, the Question in debate, is not who has a right to Secular Jurisdiction; but who have, and ought to have unalienably a capacity for it; the truth on it is, I never made this a Question, nor never will with any body while I live. The Question by its own evidence Answers it self, for nothing can be plainer, than that all men have a capacity (and that unalienably) for Civil Power, unless God and Nature has denied it to them, or depriv'd them of it. But my Question is, whatever Mens Natural Capacities may



may be for the management of Civil Trusts, whether or no, notwithstanding the lodging of those Trusts in such or such hand, depends upon the Arbitrary determination of the Supreme Authority of any Country, where Candidates put in for them. I say the lodging of these Trusts in what hands soever, depends upon the Determination of Supreme Authority, and to convince you that it does so, I shall suppose, that all the Dissenters of *England*, and Church Men too, were under the Turks Authority, with all their Natural capacities about them, I don't see, that therefore the Grand Seignior shou'd pass for a Persecutor; tho' he suffer'd these Natural capacities (like many other *lusus Naturæ*) to die, without ever being employ'd in any Secular concerns throughout his whole Dominions. But if he did deny them a Liberty to Worship God in their respective ways, then indeed he wou'd prove a Persecutor. And the Reason's plain; because in the one case, he only deprives them of what they have no unalienable right to be employ'd in; (however unalienable their capacities for it may be suppos'd to be) but in the other, he denies them that privilege which belongs to all mankind, to wit a Liberty to Worship God as Conscience does direct its true, you may alledge there is a great odds, between the case of our Dissenters, and that which I have put, and so indeed there is in vast and manifold respects, but none at all as to their Natural capacities, for Civil Power, which here and there might be the same; and therefore both here and there may upon political accounts be brought under the same or the like restraints: Or if you turn the Tables, and suppose Mahometans born among us, with very good Natural Abilities for Government, it wou'd be odd from thence to Argue, that therefore we shou'd let them into Parliament. If you say that their Religion is totally different from ours, which alters the case, I confess it does so, but yet their Natural capacities, from which you Argue, may be the same; for by Nature they are not Mahometans, nor are we by Nature Christians; but all Men by Nature have promiscuous Capacities from which it's plain, that the inference you draw from the common Capacities of Mankind, as to the right of Secular Power, will not hold more in favour of Dissenters than Mahometans. And therefore, Sir, if you give any return to this, I desire you may send along with it a short Answer to these Three Queries. *First*, Whether or no you reckon Mahometans, (or rather Jews, because we have many such Born among us) Born in *England*, Englishmen. *Secondly*, If you reckon them not such, tell me, what but the difference of Religion deprives them of their Birth-right. *Thirdly*, If you reckon them such, tell me what it is but their



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their Religion, that shoud keep them, who have Natural Capa-  
cities like other Men, from publick Posts. Sir, I have toucht,  
and I hope you'll pardon the Expression if I say, that with a  
touch I have overturn'd all that appear'd material in yours to  
me.

Dec. 8th.

Who am,

S I R,

Your hearty well-wisher,

And Humble Servant.

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